

THE THEME OF HOMELAND IN ERKIN VOHIDOV'S POETRY

Makhmudova Sadoqat Kholmatovna,

Associate Professor,
Department of Uzbek Language and Literature,
Bukhara State Pedagogical Institute.

Abstract: The theme of the homeland holds a central place in the poetry of Erkin Vohidov, one of Uzbekistan's most celebrated poets. Through vivid imagery, emotional depth, and profound symbolism, Vohidov explores the multifaceted nature of the homeland, presenting it not just as a geographical entity but as a living, breathing entity that resonates with the collective soul of the nation. His works convey a deep sense of belonging, love, and loyalty to the land, highlighting both the beauty and the struggles associated with one's homeland. Vohidov's portrayal of the Motherland is both personal and universal, resonating with readers' own experiences of attachment to their country, culture, and history. In his poetry, the homeland becomes a symbol of national identity, a place of emotional refuge, and a source of pride and strength. This exploration delves into the different dimensions of Vohidov's depiction of the Motherland, analyzing how his lyrical expressions reflect themes of patriotism, nostalgia, and the enduring bond between the individual and the land.

Keywords: Erkin Vohidov, Theme of Homeland, Patriotism, National Identity, Poetry, Uzbek Literature, Cultural Heritage, Emotional Expression, Symbolism, Motherland

Erkin Vohidov's poems about the Homeland constitute a distinctive page in twentieth-century literature. It can be observed that the image of the Homeland is created not only in the poet's works devoted specifically to this theme, but also in poems related to neighbouring subjects. In this respect, the poet's poem "Navruz Anthem" attracts particular attention:

Yurtim!

Ilhomimga sarchashma o'zing,
Birdek aziz menga yozing ham kuzing.
Bukun bahoringga she'r aytmoqchiman,
Vatanim, muborak bo'lsin navro'zing.

Navruz is a national holiday of our people that has spanned many centuries. When the poet describes the homeland as "the source of my inspiration", it reflects his deep and ardent feelings of love for the Motherland. Moreover, the poet loves his homeland in all its seasons — spring, summer, and autumn — and for its unique natural beauty. With the arrival of spring and Navruz, the lyrical hero congratulates the Homeland.

Yana olam bo'ldi yashil, serfusun,
Yana qizg'aldoqlar ochildi gulgun.
Bu yilgi ko'klamimg o'zgacha butun,
Vatanim, muborak bo'lsin Navro'zing.

In the lines above, the nature of the Homeland and its beautiful scenery are vividly depicted.

This can be observed in the imagery of the world turning green and the blooming of scarlet flowers.

Qattiq qishdan chiqding zax tortib, xorib,
Yerdan chiqqan kabi boychechak yorib.
Bag‘ringdan muz ketdi xamalga borib,
Vatanim, muborak bo‘lsin Navro‘zing.

The line “Boychechak breaking through the hard ground layer by layer” is found in a folk song. In this poem, the meaning of that folk line is also implicitly absorbed — this is an instance of folklorism, expressing scenes of national life. In other words, the snowdrop breaking through the soil and revealing itself symbolises the arrival of spring in the homeland. This flower heralds the beginning of Hamal (the first spring month). In the line “The ice has left your bosom as Hamal arrived”, ice functions as a symbol of winter. Thus, the poet figuratively depicts the end of winter and the advent of spring.

Qir yashil, bog‘ yashil, bo‘stondir yashil,
Bahoriy libosda jahondir yashil,
Erk yashil, istiqlol, imondir yashil,
Vatanim, muborak bo‘lsin Navro‘zing

The colour green symbolises renewal and revival. While the homeland wrapped in greenery represents a landscape image, the subsequent lines acquire a social meaning. Thus, the greening of freedom, independence, and faith reflects transformations in the spiritual and moral life of the nation, the revival of centuries-old religious and enlightenment values, and the restoration of Navruz, which had long been suppressed.

Boshingda hurriyat quyoshing bordir,
O‘z Tug‘ro, Bayrog‘ing, Yurtboshing bordir.
Maqsading, g‘ayrating, bardoshing bordir,
Vatanim, muborak bo‘lsin Navro‘zing.

These lines are imbued with a spirit of gratitude for national independence. The “sun of liberty” symbolises independence. Indeed, celebrations such as Navruz befit a nation that has its own emblem, flag, and leadership. From this perspective, the social content of the stanza becomes clear.

Yosh chinorsan, o‘zni tutib olarsan,
«Ilik uzildi»dan o‘tib olarsan.
Yuzlab bahorlarni kutib olarsan,
Vatanim, muborak bo‘lsin Navro‘zing

The homeland, having stepped onto the path of independence, is likened to a young plane tree. The phrase “the marrow was severed” traditionally signifies the human transition from winter to spring. Figuratively, it expresses Uzbekistan’s transition from the former system to independence. The following lines carry the character of hope and aspiration: the poet expresses great faith that the homeland will welcome hundreds of springs of independence.

Bugun dalalarga qadalgan urug‘
Inshoolloh, rizqu barakot to‘lug‘,
Ey, umid o‘lkasi, ertasi ulug‘ –
Vatanim, muborak bo‘lsin Navro‘zing.(132-bet)

This stanza has a conclusive meaning. The strengthening of social significance is evident in the images of “seeds sown in the fields” and “full of sustenance and abundance”. Here, the poet, rejoicing in independence, likens the country to a “land of hope”. The poem reflects Erkin Vohidov’s happiness at the return of Navruz to the homeland. It vividly demonstrates the harmony of the themes of homeland, nature, and independence, where social meaning is expressed against the backdrop of natural landscapes.

Erkin Vohidov’s poem “Turkestan Is One, the Homeland Is One” was written in 1992. This poem is likewise imbued with pride and reverence for the history of the homeland:

Qadim ona bu tuproq
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.
Bizga jondan azizroq
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.
Al-Beruniy yodi bor,
Yassaviy faryodi bor,
Qoshg‘ariy ijodi bor,
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

As is known, the idea of Turkestan unity forms a central theme in Rauf Parfi’s poetry. The poem above resonates with the same spirit. Turning to the ancient pages of the homeland’s history, the poet reveals, through allusion, that this feeling is as boundless as history itself, reminding us that figures such as Al-Biruni, Yassavi, and Kashgari once lived on this sacred land.

Tangritog‘ – shamoili,
Jayhun, Talas va Ili –
Bobolarim manzili –
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

Here, the vast geography of Turkestan is expressed. Surrounded by the Tien Shan mountains and the rivers Jayhun (Amu Darya), Talas, and Ili, the poet envisions Turkestan as a boundless homeland.

Forobiy cholg‘usida,
Navoiy orzusida,
Shoh Bobur qayg‘usida
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

These lines are likewise adorned with allusion. By referring to “Farabi’s melodies”, the poet alludes to the great Eastern thinker’s musical legacy, particularly his Great Book of Music. Turkestan lives within the sounds of the lute he contemplated. Likewise, Navoi dreamed of such prosperous days and a flourishing homeland. The expression “King Babur’s sorrow” is also deeply meaningful: although Babur founded a great empire abroad, he spent his life longing for and yearning after his native land. Through these figures — Farabi, Navoi, and Babur — the poet emphasises the luminous past of the homeland.

Temur bobo tug‘ida,
Shermuhammad ruhida,
Istiqlol shukuhida
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

Turkestan lives in the banner — the sword — of Amir Timur, the proud conqueror who once

shook two worlds, and in the spirit of the patriot Shermuhammad Munis. Here again, allusion serves to express this idea.

Tojik – yuksak Pomirim,

Turkman – tutash tomirim,
Qirg‘iz, qozoq – bovim –
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

In Uzbek poetry, the idea of Turkic unity is a central theme in Rauf Parfi’s work. Erkin Vohidov advances the same idea when writing about the homeland. Tajiks, Turkmens, Kyrgyz, and Kazakhs are considered part of the Turkic world. Thus, in the opening line, the poet employs both allusion and metaphor: the Tajik people are likened to the lofty Pamir Mountains, while the images of connected veins and courage refer to the shared land, faith, and kinship of the Turkic peoples.

Mustafo Cho‘qay joni,

Cho‘lponning shahid qoni,
Qodiriyning armoni –
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.

These lines are also rich in allusion. Mustafa Choqay was a patriot who fought for the independence of the Turkic peoples. Cholpon and Qadiri were martyred sons of the nation who sacrificed their lives for freedom and independence. Through these figures, the poet perceives the unity of Turkestan and the indivisibility of the homeland.

Ona yerga quloq tut,

Nidolar bo‘lmas unut.
Ruhlar aytar: ona yurt
Turkiston bir, vatan bir.(133-bet)

Here, the poet turns to the ancient history of the homeland. Mother earth symbolises the Motherland. Listening to the earth implies remembrance of the struggles fought for freedom and independence. Indeed, the cries rising from the depths of the earth cannot be forgotten.

Erkin Vohidov’s poem beginning with “The nightingales have returned to the gardens of Uzbekistan” is written in the form of a masnavi:

Mana, bukun bog‘larimga qaytib keldi bulbullar,

Hur Vatanga hur qo‘shiqalar aytib keldi bulbullar.
Men ham endi qalamimni she‘rlar uchun charxlayin,
Bu sehrli taronani g‘azallarda sharhlayin[].

The nightingales returning to the gardens are symbolic, representing national independence. Thus, the image of the nightingale carries social meaning. “The free song of the free homeland” likewise signifies the arrival of independence. The lyrical hero — the poet — rejoices in this arrival, sharpening his poetic pen to transform the magical melody of independence into verse.

Bugun sahar bulbullarning chah-chahidan uyg‘ondim,

Shohimardon tog‘larida bir yayradim, quvondim.
Chamanlarda sho‘x sayrasin, zavqqa to‘lsin bulbullar,
Qaytmas bo‘lib vatanimga kelgan bo‘lsin bulbullar.(135-bet)

In the subsequent couplets, the spirit of gratitude for independence grows ever more vivid. The image of the lyrical hero awakening to the birds’ song confirms this joy. The Shohimardon

mountains represent the vastness of the homeland, while the meadow metaphorically signifies the country itself. The poet wishes that the nightingales — symbols of independence — remain in the homeland forever.

The poems analysed above are born of the ardent love for the homeland of Erkin Vohidov, Hero of Uzbekistan and People's Poet. They consistently present the image of a patriotic and devoted lyrical hero. While the great poet writes of the homeland's unique natural beauty, he links it to the ancient and eternal Navruz. When he sings of national independence, he turns to the centuries-old history of the land. Thus, the independent homeland is likened to a young plane tree, a land of hope, while independence itself is compared to the sun of liberty and to a nightingale. Erkin Vohidov's poems exploring the pairings of homeland–nature and homeland–independence are also diverse in genre, including syllabic verse, panegyric-style poems, and masnavi. Overall, the poet's homeland lyrics stand out for the breadth of their thematic scope, their musicality, and their richness in vivid metaphors and imagery.

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